

While traveling in Florida last week, President Obama tried to deflect criticism that his administration isn't doing enough to curb high gas prices. He has recently pointed to what he called an "all-of-the-above" energy policy since he took office as well as a marked increase in domestic energy production as proof he is on the right track.

However nuanced his rhetoric, the president's stewardship of America's energy policy for more than three years has done little to stem uncertainty about energy prices and supply here at home.

For the last few weeks gasoline prices at the pump in Alabama have tracked closely with the new national average of \$3.52 a gallon. Experts say prices are due to rise above \$4 a gallon or higher by Memorial Day.

The administration blames the higher pump prices on factors which it says are largely beyond its control: continued unrest in the Middle East, economic troubles in Europe and unrelenting pressure on the world oil supply from China and India. Never mind that these challenges have been building for years, here at home President Obama continues to take an unbalanced approach to handling America's long-term energy needs, further weakening our position.

For starters, when the president claimed that domestic energy production has risen, he left out an important point. According to the Institute for Energy Research, American oil and natural gas production has increased on State and private lands by 14 and 12 percent respectively. However, oil and natural gas production on federal-controlled lands has actually decreased by 11 and six percent respectively from 2010 to 2011. Based on these figures, the Obama administration is hardly blazing a trail to develop new oil and natural gas supplies on government lands.

Not only has this administration failed to pursue an "all-of-the-above" energy strategy when it comes to permitting of drilling on public lands, but it continues to slow walk permitting of responsible new oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico while maintaining moratoriums to drilling off the east and west coasts and in portions of Alaska.

Earlier this month, the president also refused to grant a permit for the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline from Canada to the Gulf Coast – a project that would have created tens of thousands of jobs and helped bolster America's access to reliable Canadian oil supplies. As previously noted, the Chinese will benefit from the president's decision since it affords them the opportunity to gain oil supply that we will be giving up.

I have repeatedly called on the president to allow increased safe development of domestic oil and gas reserves, and I continue to support the Keystone Pipeline project. On February 16, I voted for legislation to expand domestic energy production and create jobs. The American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act calls for the resumption of offshore lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico, off the east and west coasts and in Alaska. It also promotes the development of abundant American oil shale – an untapped resource with a potential of up to 1.5 trillion barrels of oil. The energy bill also requires the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline within 30 days of passage.

The American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act passed the House by a 237 to 187 vote and now awaits action in the Senate.

President's Budget Dead on Arrival in House

On February 13, President Obama submitted his fiscal year 2013 budget to Congress. He hinted in his State of the Union Address last month that he would not be shy about calling for new federal spending this year and he was good to his word.

Mr. Obama came to office promising to cut the deficit in half, yet federal red ink continues to rise at unprecedented levels. The president's new budget projects a federal deficit of \$1.3 trillion in 2012, marking the fourth consecutive year of federal budget deficits greater than \$1 trillion.

Carried out over ten years, the president's new budget will grow the national debt to a colossal \$26 trillion. His appetite for new spending is matched only by his continued calls for higher taxes totaling nearly \$2 trillion.

America's economic recovery should not be sacrificed on the altar of the president's big spending, government-growing agenda. A recent survey of small businesses indicated that 85 percent are still not hiring, citing fears over the economy, new government regulations and uncertainty about future tax liabilities.

Needless to say, the president's bloated and irresponsible budget is dead on arrival in the House. As we did last year, House Republicans will offer in the coming weeks a responsible budget alternative that will reduce federal spending and lower the federal deficit without the crushing weight of new taxes.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.

For release: February 27, 2012